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## THE SUBJUNCTIVE IN INDIRECT QUOTATION

The review by Blase (*Wochenschr. f. klass. Phil.*, Oct. 18, 1905) of my article on "The Moods of Indirect Quotation" (*Am. Jour. of Phil.* XXVI, 1905, pp. 60 ff.) and the remarks by Frank in the last number of this journal seem to call for a few words of explanation and correction.

The illustrative passages were not, as Blase thinks, chosen in an arbitrary manner, but included all examples in Plautus of the indicative and subjunctive exclamation reflecting a previous utterance (command, suggestion, or statement) by another person, allowance being made, of course, for a few that may have escaped my search. Upon a study of these passages the article was mainly based. The German illustrations were added merely to give force to the Latin ones by their similarity. Too great stress need not be laid, and is not laid in the article, upon the German dialect specimen of an independent clause of indirect quotation. At the same time, this construction not only exists in the dialect referred to, but it has exactly the meaning which was given in the article, Blase's confident dictum notwithstanding. This form of quotation may be of secondary origin, as Frank suggests, though this is not proved by the past subjunctive used in it, for the dialect in question does not have the present subjunctive. Indeed, the distinction between *sei* and *wäre* does not, even in the German of literature, depend upon the tense of the verb of saying.

Blase further asserts that there is no difference between the indignant exclamation with the indicative and that with the subjunctive (or with *sollen*), and he appeals to any educated German to prove it. I can not agree with him as to the possible success of the appeal. The distinction is, to be sure, not one that can be measured with the yard-stick, nor one that need worry the primary grades. But when a language has two moods, each used extensively and associated with its own set of constructions throughout the language, they will necessarily, to a certain extent, carry these diverse associations with them to the mind of the hearer and will impress him in different ways. At any rate, the burden of proof rests upon him who undertakes to contradict such a fundamental psychological fact.

On the other hand, it is equally true that the speaker does not always feel it worth his while to make certain distinctions in his speech, even when the means for making them are at hand. The speaker is tired at times, or dull, or he is for some reason indifferent to a particular distinction in the matter which he is talking about. So in indirect quotation, for example, he may simply echo the statement made by another without changing the mood at all. A somewhat similar thing may happen in the case of an indignant exclamation, if the speaker is so thoroughly wrought up that the mere expression of displeasure is the essential thing, and is

not attended by any clear realization of the specific cause or of his precise relation to it. All this is only another way of saying that the boundary between the provinces of two constructions is not a fine straight line, but a wide tract of common ground, over which each may roam more or less at its will. If we wish to understand two such constructions, however, it is clear that we must lay stress upon the characteristic, distinctive uses of each, and not upon those which are purely accidental or a matter of indifference or habit.

What has just been said applies equally to Frank's claim that the Latin and the German subjunctives of indirect quotation are not to be explained in the same way. It is true that the subjunctive in Latin covers a wider field than it does in German. The difference is no doubt due to the fact that the exclusive use of the infinitive for the main clause in Latin makes it much more difficult for the indicative and the subjunctive in statements generally to influence the indirect statement and maintain a like distinction there. Even as it is, the German subjunctive of indirect quotation does not by any means uniformly express a failure to "vouch for" the truth of the statement quoted, as for example in *Ich sagte ihm, dass sein Bruder fort sei*.

The difference between the two languages is in the relative space which the two moods have come to occupy in the neutral ground between the spheres which belong to each exclusively, the subjunctive in Latin having a far larger share of it than in German. In the essential, distinctive meanings of the moods, however, the two languages agree, for the idea which the speaker positively refuses to accept is in the subjunctive, and that which he expressly represents as true is in the indicative in both. It is this distinction that needs to be explained, and when it is made clear how the subjunctive could come to be used in this sense, its use in the more or less neutral field will be easy to understand.

That this use of the subjunctive is not the one generally called the "potential" seems to me clear enough. The potential expresses an affirmation of an idea to the extent of the speaker's knowledge of supporting facts when his knowledge or the facts themselves are too limited for a full indicative assertion. The distinctive use of the subjunctive of indirect discourse, on the other hand, is expressly to withhold any such affirmation altogether. While we may be unable to trace clearly the history of the construction from its beginning, it is surely not impossible to determine the place which it occupies among the other uses of the mood; and this was the main purpose of my article.

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